

Mutual Ministry of the Saints

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"From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." ~ Ephesians 4:16

*"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."
~ Ephesians 5:18-19*

*"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."
~ Colossians 3:16*

The Body of Christ is in dire need of mutual ministry. For far too long the Body has had a one-sided ministry. This "ministry" is a result of an artificial erection of a non-scriptural dual-classification of the saints: the prominent service class – the clergy, and the quiet receiving class – the laity.

This is true even of many who have left the religious system. Unfortunately, it is far easier to get out of the *system*, than it is to get the *system* out of us! Often when saints attempt to reclaim their identity from the religious system there is the tendency to continue following, consciously or unconsciously, the course of that system.

Even those brave enough to leave the traditional gathering of the system often mimic the system that they have left. "Services" often start with some "congregational" singing, moves to the "special singing" and then on to the highlight – the "teaching service" – a religious monologue. Of course when the "teaching service" is over this brings an end to the *official* "service."

What are these gatherings called? Can we not hear, "It was good to see you at *Bible Study*?" Is this what Body life is to be reduced or limited to – *Bible Study*? Granted, the study of the Bible is paramount to the believer's life, especially on the *individual* level; for Paul's instruction is to "*Study to show **thys**elf approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed,*

rightly dividing the word of truth.” Study is *primarily* a personal and private matter before the Lord. Our collected activity is not study, but that of *mutual ministry* – “teaching and admonishing **one another**.” Tradition would have it otherwise!

The Church which is Christ’s Body desperately needs *mutual ministry* if we are to believe the verses above. Paul tells us that there is an “*effectual working in the measure of **every part***” that *alone* can make “*increase of the body unto the edifying of **itself** in love.*”

However, this life of God in His Body has been dammed up! Only a trickle of it manages to break out over the top of traditional religious “service,” and the system assures that it will stay that way! The time has come for us not only to reclaim our divine identity as the Ecclesia – the Church – but to recover our privilege of *mutual ministry*.

Do any question the falling short of the ideal of *mutual ministry*?

The prevalent understanding that is spawned by the religious system’s method and “service” of gathering is *primarily* that of *getting* something. The laity is to be the receiving class, while the prominent clergy are to be the service class. The laity submits itself to the clergy so that they may receive *something* that will last and get us through until the next gathering. You will hear the laity talking about “getting their batteries charged” or “their buckets filled.” Thus the religious “service” is designed to be *self-centered*. The ministry of the Body of Christ has somehow become a *getting* meeting rather than a very *giving* lifestyle of mutual ministry.

Is this the spirit of Christ living in His Body? Would not Christ’s life living in every believer be centered and focused on *giving*? Is it not indeed “*more blessed to give than to receive*” (Acts 20:35)?

This “empty bucket” theory, thrust upon us by the system, runs contrary to the divine ministry of the “*measure of every part.*” Is the believer’s “bucket” ever really *empty*? Has the believer nothing to minister to his fellow? Are we under the delusion that we are empty when Christ *Himself* is ever resident in us? Not only Christ, but all that He brought with Him! – *all His riches: “every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus”* (Philemon 6).

Now, the enemy would have us believe that we have nothing, that we are empty! Yet all of this is *only* a selfish sense of emptiness – a false perception, a *non-divine* viewpoint, a faithless feeling, a religious fantasy. The fullness is resident, we simply fail to acknowledge it; for Paul’s complete statement is:

“*That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.*” (Philemon 6).

Any believer can be “awakened” to his fullness by acknowledging what God has said. When we by faith believe that we already have a deposit *in us*, then there can be edification for God’s Holy Temple!

“... According to the effectual working in **the measure of every part**, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love” (Ephesians 4:16b).

“... According as God hath dealt to every man **the measure of faith**” (Romans 12:3).

The believer must realize, by faith, that this “*measure*” of which Paul writes is already *in them*. This “*measure*” from God is worthy of ministry. One must avoid the damming up of the divine resources. The living of Divine Life is not about believers with “empty buckets” waiting to be *filled*: it is about the lives of the many-membered Christ pouring out their “measures” upon each other unto mutual fullness.

Do not be satisfied with religious structure. Live daily in Divine Life. Live in your measure. Pour your measure upon others. Eagerly receive the measure of Christ in others. Enjoy a life filled with the divine expression of the giving and receiving of *mutual ministry*. This is our true identity. This is who we are. This is who God has made us as new creatures in Christ Jesus. Do not allow anything or anyone to diminish your measure from God. Live in its fullness.

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